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Role of transport and transit corridors in ensuring international cooperation for sustainable development

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/213, the present report conveys the views of Member States and relevant regional and international organizations and entities of the United Nations system, including the regional commissions, on issues relating to the development of transport and transit corridors.

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I. Introduction

1. At its sixty-ninth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 69/213 on the role of transport and transit corridors in ensuring international cooperation for sustainable development. In that resolution, the General Assembly recognized the important role of environmentally sound, safe, efficient, reliable and affordable transport and transit corridors for the efficient movement of goods and people in supporting sustainable economic growth, improving the social welfare of people and enhancing international cooperation and trade among countries, recognized the need for continued international cooperation to address the issues relating to transport and transit corridors as an important element of sustainable development, and invited the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States, relevant regional and international organizations and entities of the United Nations system, including the regional commissions, on issues relating to the development of transport and transit corridors and to communicate such views in a summary report to the General Assembly at its seventieth session.

2. The present report was prepared in accordance with that resolution. It provided a summary of the views of Member States, relevant regional and international organizations, and entities of the United Nations system, including the regional commissions, on issues relating to the development of transport and transit corridors.

II. Views of Member States

3. The Secretariat received submissions from Azerbaijan, Brunei Darussalam, Georgia, Paraguay, the Russian Federation, Turkey and Turkmenistan.

4. A summary of the views reflected in those submissions is contained in the present section.

5. Azerbaijan provided information on its work in the field of transport and transit corridors, which included:

(a) Infrastructure projects of international significance implemented to increase transit potential, such as the new Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway line, which provided a direct railway connection between Europe and Asia through the Caucasus. The first test train to the border with Turkey via Georgia was launched on 26 December 2014, and the construction of a tunnel on the border between Turkey and Georgia had been completed. The New Baku International Sea Trade Port Complex was constructed in September 2014, to ensure the widespread use of multimodal transport and to facilitate and increase maritime transportation capacity in the Caspian region, with the ferry terminal commissioned as part of the first phase of the project. Work was continuing on the reconstruction of the railway infrastructure, main roads and energy supply, the upgrading of locomotives and wagons, increasing the amount of rolling stock and the adjustment of communication and signal systems to international standards. Work was also ongoing on the reconstruction of international motorways. Currently, maintenance and reconstruction of roads on the State borders with the Russian Federation, Georgia and the Islamic Republic of Iran were being implemented in compliance with the standards of the first technical level;

(b) A legislative framework was being developed and other activities were under way in the field of transit policy, such as the integration of the transport network of Azerbaijan into the Trans-European Transport Network in the East-West direction within the European Union. In the field of transport, Azerbaijan was working on achieving high-level cooperation with the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). Appropriate steps were being taken by Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan and Turkey for the realization of the "Silk Wind" project, with a view to the creation of regular and efficient container train routes by shortening transportation time and facilitating customs services, as well as the overall transportation process, along the East-West transport corridor. It was planned to create a modern highway and ancillary road infrastructure along the Baku-Tbilisi-Batumi-Trabzon route (1,135 km) as part of the Model Highway Initiative, put forward by the International Road Transport Union. Azerbaijan had ratified 15 ECE conventions and agreements on transport, and work on the ratification of 10 further ECE conventions and agreements, including those on the Trans-European Railway and Trans-European Motorways, was in progress. The accession of Azerbaijan to the Convention concerning International Carriage by Rail had been endorsed by the National Assembly, and the relevant measures were being carried out for it to become a member of the Intergovernmental Organization for International Carriage by Rail and in relation to other procedural issues deriving from the Convention.

6. Brunei Darussalam indicated that it supported the proposal relating to the need for coordination between agencies and government entities involved in facilitating cross-border routes, as well as international cooperation in addressing cross-border issues and transportation with a view to achieving sustainable transport. The matter was being actively discussed by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the members of the Brunei Darussalam Indonesia Malaysia the Philippines-East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA), which supported the strengthening of regional economic integration of ASEAN and BIMP-EAGA members. As a small market economy, cross-border routes in particular were an important means for Brunei Darussalam to promote trade and increase the amount of commercial cargo.

7. Georgia provided detailed information on the transit potential of its transport network, as follows:

(a) Located at the crossroads of Europe and Central Asia, Georgia was a bridge connecting several important economic regions, including the European Union, the Caucasus region, the Commonwealth of Independent States and Turkey. It was a key link in the shortest transit route between Western Europe and Central Asia for the transport of oil and gas, as well as dry cargo. Georgian oil and gas pipelines, and the country's Black Sea ports, highways, railway systems and airports were playing an increasingly important role in linking East and West. In order to facilitate the transport of goods through Georgian territory, the Government of Georgia was continuing to liberalize regulations on international transport, develop the transport infrastructure, including roads, railways, seaports and airports, simplify customs and other administrative procedures, and introduce economic reforms in the field;

(b) The long-term vision for the development of transit potential in Georgia included: integration into international transport networks; the development of

logistics facilities and services; supporting the development of multimodal transport systems; upgrading the transport infrastructure; improving safety conditions; forming competitive transportation tariffs; attracting cargo flows from the regions of China; creating competitive conditions in the corridor; acceding to international agreements; and developing cooperation with international organizations;

(c) The Government of Georgia actively cooperated on ongoing projects with international organizations, such as the European Commission, the Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA) programme, ECE, ESCAP, the International Transport Forum, the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development, the International Road Transport Union, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the United States Agency for International Development;

(d) Georgia actively participated in the important regional project TRACECA:

(i) Georgia had been a member of TRACECA since 1993. TRACECA was a technical assistance programme aimed at developing the transport corridor between Europe and Asia across the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, and the countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia. The States members of TRACECA were Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Romania, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. TRACECA transport networks passed through the territories of countries with an abundance of mineral resources and energy supply. Transit development in those countries affected the growth of production and employment in the regions;

(ii) Since it was launched in 1993, TRACECA had financed 80 projects, including more than 60 on technical assistance and 14 on investments. The programme enhanced the capacity of the partner countries to access European and world markets through alternative transport routes, increasing the political and economic independence of the countries concerned. The cooperation framework covered the areas of maritime transport, aviation, roads and railways, transport security and transport infrastructure. The framework contributed to regional cooperation among the partner countries and helped attract support from international financial institutions and private investors;

(iii) The Basic Multilateral Agreement on International Transport for Development of the Europe-the Caucasus-Asia Corridor, signed in 1998 in Azerbaijan, was the key TRACECA document, establishing the legal basis for the development of economic relations, and trade and transport communication in the region. Georgia actively participated in the technical assistance projects under TRACECA, and was facilitating the development of a legislative basis. Georgia also contributed to enhancing cooperation among the Black Sea countries and had proposed a new technical annex to the Basic Multilateral Agreement on Joint Operation of Railway-Ferry Links between the Parties of the Basic Multilateral Agreement on the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, which was currently under deliberation. The new technical annex was signed on 29 January 2015.

(e) The ongoing projects under TRACECA included:

(i) Maritime safety and security II project. This European Union-funded project was a response to the interest of the European Union in developing cooperation in maritime safety, security and protection of the marine environment by providing technical expertise and support to the member countries of the Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia. The overall objectives of the project were to align the partners' legislation with the European Union regulatory framework, support the further ratification and implementation of international maritime safety and security conventions of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), and improve the quality and coordination of maritime administrations in the Black Sea and Caspian Sea partner countries;

(ii) Road Safety II project. The overall objective of the project was to support the implementation of the TRACECA Regional Road Safety Action Plan, ensuring that the corridor transport system actively promoted the safety, security and protection of users, property, the general public and the environment, where they might be involved in or affected by the system, and assisting countries in strengthening institutional capacity;

(iii) Transport dialogue and networks interoperability II project. The main purpose of the project was to strengthen economic relations, trade and transport links between the European Union and the countries participating in the programme: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Romania, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. The project would contribute to the development and implementation of regional transport policy actions, such as activities under the TRACECA Action Plan related to infrastructure development, the facilitation of multimodal transport and the harmonization of transport legislation;

(iv) Development of the transport corridor between the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea: Ukraine had drafted an agreement on the development of the transport corridor between the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea. The purpose of the agreement was to develop the transit corridor between the member countries of the agreement. The parties to the agreement were Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Estonia, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Turkey and Ukraine. Implementation of the project would improve cooperation in transport and trade among the countries by creating suitable conditions for carriers, increasing transportation safety and attracting additional cargo flows. Georgia was currently going through internal procedures with regard to accession to the agreement;

(v) The lapis lazuli project. The Government of Georgia was actively participating in the project. It had been initiated by the Government of Afghanistan, which envisaged the conclusion of a trade, transit and transportation cooperation agreement among the Governments of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey and Turkmenistan. The main goal of the project was to promote the most commercially viable route between Afghanistan and Europe. The project would be of paramount importance in the development of the transit potential of member countries and in attracting additional cargo flows in the Europe-Caucasus-Asia transport corridor;

(f) Large infrastructure projects include:

(i) Construction of the Anaklia new deep water Black Sea port. The Government of Georgia attached great importance to the construction of the new deep sea port in Anaklia. The Anaklia port would have the following competitive advantages: a strategic location; the capacity to receive Panamax-type vessels; one-stop-shopping solutions; simple, fast procedures; and year-round safe navigation. The construction of the new port was strategically important, and would result in a significant increase in cargo turnover through Georgia. The port would gradually reach capacity for handling 100 million tons of cargo. The Government of Georgia was also considering establishing a free industrial zone in the area adjacent to the port;

(ii) Baku-Tbilisi-Kars new railroad line project: The Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway was a new corridor that would connect the Azerbaijani, Georgian and Turkish railways. Project implementation had begun in 2008, and the main part of the construction would be finished in Georgian territory in 2015. The project involved the rehabilitation and reconstruction of 178 km of railway between Marabda and Akhalkalaki and the construction of a new railway from Akhalkalaki to the Turkish border. The project would effectively open a new rail corridor from the Caspian Sea to Europe, through Turkey. The project would be an important driver of future incremental transport volumes and for containerized cargo in particular. The test train was launched in January 2015;

(iii) Georgian railway modernization project. This project was focused on the main line that ran from Tbilisi to the Black Sea, and, particularly, on the terminals at Poti and Batumi. As part of the project, the Company intended to modernize the railway and electrical supply infrastructure between Tbilisi and Batumi, including the 40-kilometre mountainous gorge region in Central Georgia, with the aim of achieving passenger train speeds of 80 km an hour on the gorge section, and 120 km an hour on the rest of the main line, as compared with current average speeds of approximately 55 km an hour in the gorge section, and approximately 65-90 km an hour on the rest of the main line;

(iv) East-West Highway improvement project. The Government of Georgia was conducting the construction and rehabilitation of the East-West Highway in accordance with international standards. The project involved upgrading the highway from two to four lanes. Development of the Georgian road network was in progress and the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the Japanese International Cooperation Agency, the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development were among international donor organizations supporting the work;

(g) Other projects on transport and transit corridors included:

(i) Tbilisi Silk Road Forum: The first meeting of the Forum would take place on 15 and 16 October 2015 in Tbilisi. The meeting would explore new initiatives for enhancing partnership in four main areas of cooperation: transport, energy, trade and people-to-people contact. The idea of the Silk Road was not new. However, the mission was far from being accomplished. The level of economic, political and cultural interdependence of the countries of the region was continually increasing, and the opportunities and challenges

were becoming progressively more intertwined. The economies of the countries of the region were showing a promising tendency towards improvement; however, competition over natural resources, disputes over boundaries and disagreements over values were driving further wedges between countries and subregions across the continent;

(ii) New Silk Road economic belt. Georgia was participating in the project, which had been initiated by China. The Silk Road Fund was established in February 2015. It had funding of $40 billion, which was allocated to support transport infrastructure, logistics and energy projects in the States involved in the project. The implementation of the project would simplify cargo transfer between States participating in the project and regions, and trade and economic relations. It would also attract additional investments, create new jobs and promote the development of participant States;

(iii) Railway freight transportation from China to Georgia. In February 2015, the first railway freight transportation from China to Georgia was carried out. The project was the result of close cooperation among Azerbaijan, China, Georgia and Kazakhstan. The Trans-Asian-Caucasian train made it possible to reduce transit time to a fifth of that of carriage by sea. If, for example, 40-45 days were required for sea transportation from China, freight would arrive in Georgia within 9 days by the new rail route.

8. Paraguay indicated that it sat on the South American Infrastructure and Planning Council, the regional integration and infrastructure forum of the Union of South American Nations. The Council was established in January 2009 to engage in political and strategic discussions geared towards integrating the regional infrastructure of the member States of the Union through consultation, evaluation, cooperation and planning and by coordinating efforts and linking programmes and projects. The statute and the regulations of the Council were adopted in December 2009, paving the way for the Initiative for the Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America. In 2011, the Council worked to design the Strategic Action Plan (2012-2022) and the Integration Priority Project Agenda. The following projects, which were closely linked to the improvement of the transit corridors of Paraguay and involved joint investment, were among the most important on the Agenda: the Paranaguá-Antofagasta Bioceanic Railway Corridor (Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Paraguay); the Foz do Iguaçú-Ciudad del Este-Asunción-Clorinda road connection; the 500-KV transmission line linking Itaipú, Asunción and Yacyretá; improvement of navigation conditions on the rivers of the La Plata Basin; the Paraguay and Argentina-Uruguay railway interconnection; and the Infante Rivarola-Cañada Oruro border crossing (Paraguay and Bolivia (Plurinational State of)).

9. Turkey stated that, in line with its multidimensional, principled and human-oriented foreign policy, with the importance it attached to regional and global cooperation, that it was undertaking the necessary steps, as a natural outcome of its unique geographical situation, to develop alternative transport links between Europe and Asia to accommodate rising freight traffic between Asia and Europe. In pursuance of international cooperation in transport and transit corridors, as referred to in General Assembly resolution 69/213, Turkey was implementing alternative road and railway projects to improve cross-border transportation infrastructure, with the ultimate aim of enhancing prosperity and living standards for the peoples of all the countries concerned, in an inclusive manner.

10. Turkmenistan stated that the development of national transport infrastructure and its integration into international transport and communications networks were becoming matters of the utmost importance, as they played a major role in enabling States to participate in global development processes. Turkmenistan had developed its own vision for engagement with the international community in the field of transport. The main goal of that vision was the advancement of scientifically justified and practicable models of multilateral partnership in the transport sector and the establishment of a set of legal, institutional, economic, technical and other conditions necessary to enhance and improve the efficiency of international transport and transit communications.

11. Turkmenistan proposed the following policy recommendations on transport and transit corridors:

(a) Consistently develop transport capacity, and initiate and implement major international and regional transport projects;

(b) Give impetus to interregional linkages with a long-term perspective. Diversification, a key concept underlying States' transport strategies, must be seen as a decisive factor in the formation of multimodal continental transport infrastructure;

(c) One of the most important tasks was the consistent integration of States' transport systems into the international communications network. One expected result of these efforts would be the establishment of the transport logistics centres required for multimodal transport. New transport corridors would expand the market for transport services. This in turn would require an active foreign trade marketing policy, the optimization of tariffs with countries participating in international transport corridors and a flexible system of tariff preferences;

(d) Continue to define a network of international, regional and interregional integrated intermodal transport corridors and to formalize these through the adoption of new international and regional agreements;

(e) Conduct an analysis of corridors in order to identify physical and non-physical barriers on the basis of best international practices;

(f) Develop and implement national strategies and action plans for the development of international transport and transit facilities, with a particular focus on facilitating transport, simplifying border-crossing procedures and introducing modern transport logistics technologies. Ensure that national strategies and action plans were well coordinated with neighbouring States;

(g) Develop transport and supporting infrastructure in a consistent and interconnected manner, so as to provide international transport and trade links;

(h) Speed up the process of accession to United Nations agreements and conventions on transport and their effective implementation at the national level;

(i) Broaden participation in multilateral and regional agreements on transport, transit and trade, with a view to accelerating economic growth;

(j) Ensure effective implementation of United Nations agreements and conventions and regional and bilateral agreements on transport, transit and trade facilitation, as applicable, with a view to reducing transport prices and time;

(k) Continue to work towards operational interoperability of transport infrastructure and rolling stock, especially in neighbouring regions, through harmonization of technical regulations on the basis of international norms and standards, including those contained in United Nations agreements and conventions;

(l) Support countries in identifying resources, including greater use of public-private partnership schemes, to finance the development of transport networks and key transport corridors;

(m) Build capacity and carry out legal, regulatory and policy reform to create an enabling environment for greater public and private investment in transport infrastructure;

(n) Mobilize funding from international financial institutions and regional development banks to implement national infrastructure development projects along transport corridors;

(o) Help developing countries, in particular landlocked developing countries, to develop the capacity to prepare bankable, large-scale infrastructure projects and to explore innovative financing mechanisms for those projects, including public-private partnerships, where appropriate;

(p) Promote the development of regional infrastructure funds and commercial investment associations with the possible inclusion of investments from other countries, transnational companies and private investors for the implementation of joint investment projects, and increase the efficient use of transport and supporting infrastructure;

(q) Promote further regional integration by strengthening regional trade, transport and transit. Promote the harmonization of regional transport strategies, with a view to strengthening synergies, enhancing the competitiveness of transport corridors at the regional and global levels and strengthening international supply chains;

(r) Foster greater participation by landlocked developing countries in international transport projects and in bilateral and regional integration agreements in the areas of trade, transport and transit;

(s) Promote the launch and start-up in 2016 of the Global Partnership for Sustainable Transport, involving Governments, international organizations and businesses, as an innovative multilateral mechanism for the development and harmonization of transport in the context of globalization;

(t) Facilitate the formulation and implementation of national and regional transport strategies aimed at making a practical contribution to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development;

(u) Promote the establishment of effective and affordable transport systems for poverty reduction, and take measures to mitigate the adverse impacts of transportation on health and the environment;

(v) Ensure more comprehensive development of transport, inter alia by including rural roads in programmes for the broader development of road networks;

(w) Promote public transport as an important element of mobility and tourism development along international transport corridors;

(x) Carry out activities at the national, subregional, regional and global levels for follow-up and review of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024;

(y) Mainstream the Vienna Programme of Action into national and sectoral development strategies, in order to ensure their effective implementation;

(z) As appropriate, establish national coordination mechanisms in landlocked developing countries and transit developing countries;

(aa) Develop and implement national and regional plans to improve road safety along international road transit corridors, in line with the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety;

(bb) Intensify efforts to ensure security and to combat illegal migration and other illicit activity and terrorism in all international transport corridors and in all modes of transportation;

(cc) Intensify cooperation for the prevention and elimination of natural and man-made disasters along transport corridors and the implementation of joint environmental projects on transport.

12. The Russian Federation indicated that one of the issues in international rail transport development was the creation of favourable conditions for passenger trains to cross State borders efficiently. This was a complex issue to resolve because of the need to negotiate agreements that took into account the interests of international train passengers, railway companies and government monitoring bodies. Currently, these issues were regulated by the International Convention to Facilitate the Crossing of Frontiers for Passengers and Baggage carried by Rail of 10 January 1952, which defined the basic principles for the functioning of border stations, the review of operations, the establishment of a customs regime and the simplification of customs control. However, while on the one hand a majority of the participating countries had not ratified the Convention (only 10 States were parties to it) and, indeed, it had lost its relevance as more recent agreements had come into force, on the other hand developments in transport and in States' legislation on border-crossing issues had created an environment conducive to the development of a modern legal instrument to facilitate border crossing in international passenger rail transport.

13. At the seventy-sixth session of the Inland Transport Committee of the Economic Commission for Europe, held in Geneva in February 2014, the Russian Federation suggested that this matter be considered. The initiative was supported by participants, and a decision was taken to establish, under the auspices of the United Nations, an informal working group to prepare a draft convention on the facilitation of crossing of frontiers for passengers and baggage carried by rail. The Russian Federation had prepared an outline for the new convention, which was endorsed by the participants in the informal working group.

14. At its second meeting in April 2015, the working group considered the preliminary draft convention on the facilitation of State border crossing in the international rail transport of passengers, baggage and cargo submitted by the Russian Federation, which was based on the principles of the framework document, and did not contain excessive detail or conditions for bilateral and multilateral cooperation between countries. When the draft had been finalized, it would be

submitted for discussion to the eighth Interagency Consultative Meeting on Facilitation of Border Crossing in International Freight and Passenger Traffic by Rail of the Organization for Co-operation between Railways, to be held in September 2015 in Gdansk, Poland.

15. The Russian Railways Company and the Russian Academy of Sciences were initiating and developing the concept for a new "mega-project" for a trans-Eurasian belt development, which was of paramount importance in the development of the railway industry in Europe and Asia. It would be based on a comprehensive infrastructure system, with a flexible combination of transport, energy and telecommunications systems. The key feature of the belt development was global and solidarity-based socioeconomic development of countries and regions. It should be noted that the start-up infrastructure and the logistical basis for implementing the project concept had been established and were working effectively:

(a) Russian Railways was implementing a programme to develop an integrated eastern polygon, including the Baikal-Amur Railway and the Trans-Siberian Railway, which were an integral part of the East-West transport corridor;

(b) Thanks to the renovation of a section of the Khasan (Russian Federation)-Rajin (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) railway and the construction of a cargo terminal in the port of Rajin by Russian Railways, a new route had been created for the delivery of goods in both directions between countries in the Asia-Pacific region and Europe, with transit through the territory of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea;

(c) The increase in regular shipments between Chongqing, China, and Duisburg, Germany, (more than 490 container trains had used the route), together with the use of the common Uniform Rules concerning the Contract for International Carriage of Goods by Rail/Agreement on International Railway Freight Communications (CIM/SMGS) consignment note (94 container trains), had consistently developed and improved supply chains in the direction China-Europe;

(d) The establishment at the end of 2014, on the initiative of the railway companies of the Eurasian Economic Union (Russian Railways, Kazakhstan Temir Zholy and Belarusian Railways), of the United Transport and Logistics Company, was an important step in strengthening and expanding Euro-Asian links. The company included the largest operating companies of the three States concerned. To date, this was the only large integration business project of the Eurasian Economic Union, and it had been fully operational since 1 January 2015.

III. Views of relevant regional and international organizations and entities of the United Nations system, including the regional commissions

16. The Secretariat received input from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

17. A summary of views reflected in those inputs is contained in the present section.

18. ECLAC noted that the performance of national and regional transport systems was a key factor for achieving the sustainable development goals and, in the particular case of the ECLAC region, for progressing towards greater economic and social equality. The ECLAC region had achieved significant progress in developing regional transport corridors and addressing transit issues. Developing regional transport infrastructure networks and/or creating or improving the regular framework for international transport and transit operations represented a core activity of the major integration initiatives in the region.[1] In addition, most ECLAC countries were contracting parties to regional and global transport agreements, which facilitated international transport and transit operations.[2]

19. Some challenges existed, such as the lack or low quality of infrastructure, inefficient border-crossing procedures, the generally limited use of more sustainable modes of transport (rail and inland water) and deficiencies in the design and implementation of existing public policies. In that context, the current priority of ECLAC consisted in helping countries advance towards improving national public policies on logistics and mobility and providing technical assistance to the regional integration initiatives in drawing up a regional strategy in that area. The integrated and sustainable approach to transport issues at both the national and the regional levels was a fundamental basis for international cooperation on transport and transit corridors.

20. International transport corridors should be identified, designed and implemented, keeping in mind the competitive advantages of each mode of transport and addressing both infrastructure needs and the regulatory and institutional framework for the services that those corridors provide. International and national efforts in this area should mobilize all stakeholders. There was a need to incorporate, in a balanced manner, all the dimensions of sustainable development. Integrated and sustainable public policies on logistics and mobility were needed both at the national and regional level to provide a solid foundation for successful international cooperation on transport and transit corridors.

21. ILO emphasized that the transport sector employed many workers in a wide range of job categories. The sector's resilience and sustainability, including in the development of transport and transit corridors, also depended on providing decent working conditions to its workforce. Regional economic integration and cooperation efforts should not neglect the social aspects of the transport sector. The main efforts of ILO focused on the promotion of social dialogue, workplace occupational safety and health, workforce gender balance, improving working conditions, and analysis of employment relationships and their impact on decent work.

22. Some of the transport activities carried out by the ILO Transport and Maritime Unit of the Sectoral Policies Department included:

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[1] Including the Union of South American Nations, the Central American Integration System, the Mesoamerican Integration and Development Project, the Latin American Integration Association, the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and the Andean Community.

[2] An overview of the regional transport and transit-related initiatives and agreements is available in ECLAC, "The future of trade and transport facilitation: implications of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement", in *FAL Bulletin*, No. 333 (5/2014) (Santiago, Chile, 2014).

(a) Sectoral Meeting on Safety and Health in the Road Transport Sector (12-16 October 2015). The purpose of the Meeting would be for tripartite constituents to discuss priority safety and health issues in relation to both passenger and freight road transport, with a view to adopting conclusions on future programme development and to informing policy-making on the selected topic at the international, regional and national levels. The promotion of HIV/AIDS tools and the IMO/ILO/ECE Code of Practice for Packing of Cargo Transport Units would also be discussed;

(b) Manual for Social Dialogue in the Railways Sector, 2015. The Manual was aimed at providing a summary background on recent developments in the sector and serving as a basic practical guide to initiate social dialogue;

(c) Tripartite Meeting of Experts to update the ILO code of practice on safety and health in ports (October 2016). The meeting was for the review and update of the ILO code of practice on safety and health in ports;

(d) Port worker Development Programme in Bulk Terminals, 2015-2017. The Programme drew on previous experience and on existing training materials for the terminals dealing with bulk cargo. It would enable Governments and port authorities to establish effective and systematic port-worker training schemes designed to improve cargo-handling performance, working conditions and practices, safety and the welfare of port workers in bulk terminals;

(e) IMO/ILO/ECE Code of Practice for Packing of Cargo Transport Units. The Code provided information and advice to parties involved along the supply chain and broadened the scope of the 1997 Guidelines for Packing of Cargo Transport Units;

(f) HIV/AIDS toolkits. These were prepared in collaboration with other partners and were entitled "Driving for change: training toolkit on HIV/AIDS for the road transport sector" in 2008 and "On the right track: training toolkit on HIV/AIDS for the road transport sector" in 2010.

23. UNCTAD stated that transport infrastructure and services, including along transport corridors, were at the heart of international supply chains, trade and globalization. Their resilience and sustainability could however be significantly undermined by environmental factors, such as climate variability and change. Adapting freight transport systems to the impacts of climate change and building their climate resilience was therefore an imperative that should form an integral part of the management strategies for transport corridors.

24. UNCTAD noted that the potential shift to sustainable transport could result, by 2050, in as much as $20 trillion in savings in terms of global land transport infrastructure investments and maintenance costs. For freight transport infrastructure and systems, including along transport corridors, sustainability and resilience criteria needed to be taken into account at the early stages of infrastructure and equipment investment, development and procurement planning. Scaling up investment levels and diversifying sources of funding were crucial. Mainstreaming sustainability and resilience criteria into freight transport and corridor development planning, policies and investment decisions required a multi-stakeholder approach.

25. In 2012, UNCTAD had finalized a cross-border and transit transport process management toolkit on corridor development, which was implemented in two transit corridors, namely the central corridor in East Africa and the Almaty-Bishkek-Dushanbe corridor in Central Asia. Regional capacity-building workshops were organized in both regions, as was national capacity building training in the countries crossed by these corridors. Three manuals on transport and transit corridors were developed: on cluster development methodology, on transit corridor analysis and on supply chain management methodology applied to transit corridors, which were integrated in the toolkit. The toolkit was part of the activities of a project executed by ESCAP, in cooperation with UNCTAD and ECA, on capacity-building for control authorities and transport operators to improve efficiency of cross-border transport in landlocked and transit developing countries.

26. The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) indicated that transport and transit corridors were intended to boost economic growth at the local, regional and international levels; promote connectivity between cities, peoples and resources; facilitate intra-regional and inter-regional trade and provide landlocked countries with access to international gateways such as ports. Transit and transport corridors could serve multiple jurisdictions, and domestic, foreign and transit traffic. On domestic routes, urban corridors played a key role in the movement of people within a city, its peri-urban areas and rural hinterlands.

27. Transport and transit corridors played a key role in regional integration, international cooperation and the promotion of local, national, regional and international trade. Development of transport and transit corridors needed a vast and reliable source of funding to initiate corridor development work and facilitate investment in the corridor and all associated services, such as monitoring and evaluation. The public sector was mainly involved in providing infrastructure and regulation functions along the corridor, and private sector players could be engaged in financing and aiding the operations of transport and transit corridors, such as by providing carriers and transfer facilities. Public-private partnership was therefore crucial for a well-functioning transport corridor.

28. Transit time and cost, flexibility and reliable schedules along a corridor defined the quality of services provided and the level of competitive advantage over other corridors. The availability of multimodal transport along a transit corridor improved its options and the price ranges which could be used in delivering goods and services, depending on demand and market trends. Poor connectivity, inadequate interoperations, or the absence thereof, and limited market access for market providers led to inefficiencies in international corridors. Customs reforms and facilitation of trade at the regional and international levels were key components in improving corridor performance. Change was needed in the management of corridor infrastructure, gateways, internal nodes, transfer points and border points to improve the efficiency of corridors and the entire support infrastructure.

29. Stakeholder inclusion in corridor development allowed for project adoption by various stakeholders, the sharing of indigenous knowledge regarding the development and proposed routes, ease of formulation of project policy goals and proposals, and ease of implementation of projects. Accordingly, an integrated approach would be taken in the whole process. This had a higher chance of success than any corridor investment. Sustainable transport solutions were implemented by

UN-Habitat, in collaboration with partners in different parts of the world, such as the project on sustainable transport solutions in East African cities.

30. The Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States noted that landlocked developing countries faced special challenges linked to their lack of access to the sea, further exacerbated by remoteness from major markets, inadequate infrastructure, cumbersome border crossings and logistical bottlenecks that prevented them from fully participating in global markets. Landlocked developing countries were also dependent on their transit neighbours for their trade and connectivity. The structural vulnerabilities and limited productive capacities of such countries further limited their development efforts. High transport costs eroded the competitive edge of those countries and constituted the greatest impediment to increasing trade volumes and reaching equitable access to global markets.

31. Efficient transport infrastructure and transit corridors were crucial for improving the connectivity of landlocked developing countries, stimulating regional integration, facilitating trade, driving effective integration into the global economy and developing global and regional supply chains. The Asian Highway network, Trans-African Highway network and Trans-Asian railway network provided for connectivity in the regions concerned. However, they were characterized by low-quality infrastructure and missing links. It was important to fill the missing links along transport corridors in the regions with landlocked developing countries, in order to improve their connectivity and with a view to closing the existing infrastructure gaps. This required all sources of financing.

32. Improvements in soft infrastructure and trade facilitation were equally important to stimulate faster and more efficient trade for landlocked developing countries and the smooth functioning of transit corridors. The implementation of the specific actions of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024 would, among other things, facilitate the establishment of efficient transit transport systems, increase regional integration and help integrate landlocked developing countries into the global trading system. The Vienna Programme of Action provided a number of important recommendations and a basis for action with regard to the need of landlocked developing countries to develop efficient and sustainable transport infrastructure, promote industrialization and diversification, structurally transform their economies and build capacities.

33. WFP recognized the important role of environmentally sound, safe, efficient, reliable and affordable transport and transit corridors in supporting sustainable economic growth and improving the social welfare of the people. Transport and transit corridors, particularly in fragile States and following emergencies, helped support or restore food security and nutrition, establish or rebuild livelihoods, reduce risk and enable people, communities and countries to meet their own food and nutrition needs.

34. In line with its mandate to eradicate hunger and poverty, and implemented through special operations activities, WFP was engaging in the construction of transport and transit corridors to speed up the movement of food assistance, whether or not the food was provided by WFP. Typically, such operations involved logistics and infrastructure work and were designed to overcome operational bottlenecks. Special operations were short-term in nature and usually complemented emergency operations or longer rehabilitation projects.

35. The feeder roads special operation in South Sudan, launched in March 2011 to support the WFP South Sudan emergency operation, was an example of how the work of WFP on transport and transit corridors contributed to the fight against hunger and supported sustainable economic growth. The main goal of the feeder roads special operation was to create farm-to-market access by rehabilitating rural roads in areas with an agricultural potential. The benefits of these road construction projects included: (a) increased agricultural production, enhanced by improved access to markets for agricultural produce and inputs; (b) employment generation for local community members, where possible targeted at women; (c) improved access to education, health and administrative centres and generally facilitated implementation of development projects; (d) improved access to vulnerable communities for WFP and other humanitarian actors; (e) Training and support of national contractors to increase private sector capacity to undertake future rehabilitation and maintenance works; (f) strengthened capacity of national and state government staff. Sustainability and capacity development were important considerations for the design and implementation of the feeder roads operation, as a road was only sustainable if it could be maintained locally.

36. WHO noted the reference in General Assembly resolution 69/213 to recent United Nations General Assembly road safety resolutions,[3] the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020 and the forthcoming second Global High-level Conference on Road Safety, to be held on 18 and 19 November 2015 in Brazil.

37. The global magnitude of road traffic fatalities had not shown a significant decline in the last 10 years. Currently, road traffic crashes were the ninth leading cause of death globally, and were projected to become the seventh leading cause of death by 2030. Road traffic crashes were the leading cause of death for young people aged 15-29 years. Globally, WHO estimated that 1.24 million people died owing to road traffic crashes in 2010. According to the World Bank, road traffic crashes were estimated to cost more than US$1800 billion, or 3 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP), globally, with the economic losses in low- and middle-income countries equivalent to 5 per cent of GDP, or US$1000 billion per year.

38. There were proven interventions that could be implemented in transport and transit corridors, which would help to reduce the global magnitude and impact of road traffic injuries. These included controlling speed, reducing drinking and driving, and enhancing road infrastructure. While transport and transit corridors were necessary as they played an important role in the movement of people and goods, one of the main challenges was that these corridors tended to be developed with little consideration for the safety, accessibility and development of the many local communities and settlements they passed through. High-speed inter-urban roads often passed through villages, towns and cities without adequate traffic calming measures. Inadequate foresight and safety planning could increase the risks for people who lived in settlements along those corridors.

[3] Resolutions 57/309, 58/9, 58/289, 60/5, 62/244, 64/255, 66/260 and 68/269.